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PRESS CONFERENCE
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SECRETARY PERRY: While most of the press attention the last two days has focused on Bosnia, our meeting actually covered many other important areas as well. This morning, for example, I briefed our allies on President Clinton's decisions on our nuclear posture review. This was a detailed briefing on a very complex report. But there are two main elements which are worth reviewing at this time.

First of all, we are reducing--significantly reducing--our nuclear stockpile, both through treaty agreements and unilaterally. But, the United States will retain unchanged its commitments to continue to provide nuclear deterrents to NATO, including the retention of nuclear weapons in Europe.

Yesterday's discussion included a fairly detailed discussion on implementing the Partnership for Peace and NATO expansion. Next year we will start briefing countries on the responsibilities of eventual membership. But I want to emphasize that there is no time table set at this point. And all of us believe that this process will take some years.

The emphasis on our meeting, then, was not on this expansion, which is some years in the future, but on how to make a reality--how to enhance the effectiveness--of the Partnership for Peace, which will be our main activity next year. And we discussed ways of getting adequate funding to finance the joint exercising. In that regard, the United States is proposing to commit a hundred million dollars in fiscal 96, which begins in October, 1995, for that purpose.

I'd like to make the point that the NATO expansion that is being considered is not anti-Russian, it is pro-peace. I will be leaving shortly after this meeting today to go to Moscow to join with Vice President Gore, and there we will be meeting with Russian leaders on a wide range of European security issues.

Also yesterday, we did have intensive discussions on Bosnia. And these discussions took place in the context of what I would have to say was considerable frustration with the difficulties that UNPROFOR has had in carrying out its basic mission on the delivery of humanitarian aid: the harassment of the UNPROFOR soldiers, the obstruction of the delivery of aid. And all of that frustration has led in the last few weeks to talks of withdrawal of UNPROFOR by many of the troop-contributing nations. In that context, then, President Clinton last week made a commitment that if the UNPROFOR forces withdraw, and if NATO assisted in that withdrawal, that the United States would fully participate in that withdrawal operation, including providing ground troops to make that effective.

The President, when he made that commitment, had two conditions which were important. The first is that this be--the withdrawal exercise, if it is done--be done with a unity of command, under the NATO command and control system. And, secondly, that it be done with overwhelming force. We do not want to go into Bosnia with a token force. We say that on the belief that the best chance of avoiding a confrontation--the best chance, therefore, of avoiding casualties in this operation--is to have such a strong force that no one will consider it an inviting target.

At our meetings here yesterday we were briefed by SACEUR on the planning efforts to execute this withdrawal. That planning effort is still underway, but it is proceeding very well, and I would like to make two points about it. First of all, it does meet our requirement for overwhelming force. That is, this is a very significant force that they are planning to put forward. And secondly, it does involve unity of command with the NATO command and control system. Therefore, it meets what would be the American conditions for participating in this force.

The various member nations have already made pledges for the participation in that, and I have no doubt that if NATO is asked to provide this force, that we will be able to assemble the necessary force, and that it will be very effective.

Having said that, let me emphasize that I believe, and the United States believes, that UNPROFOR has been performing a very valuable function, even in the face of all of these frustrations. The delivery of humanitarian aid, the effects of reducing the levels of violence in Bosnia, and certainly they have been effective in preventing the spread of the war beyond Bosnia. I believe that we can conservatively say that UNPROFOR's presence has saved literally tens of thousands of lives.

Therefore, we continue to believe that if UNPROFOR can be saved, if UNPROFOR can be made more effective, that is much better than withdrawing it. And so we are opposed, really, to withdrawing UNPROFOR.

It was interesting that the commitment that the President made was one of the contributing effects in changing the dynamics of the discussion of UNPROFOR. It refocused attention on the important role of UNPROFOR. It caused the contributing nations to think of the consequences of an UNPROFOR withdrawal. And so whereas in the last few weeks the emphasis was on what would it take to get UNPROFOR out of Bosnia, the emphasis this week--and certainly the emphasis at this meeting--has been on what could we do to make UNPROFOR more effective, so that it could stay.

In that regard, I met Monday, before I came over to Europe, with Minister Francois Leotard, from France. And he and I

shared the view that it was important to try to find a way to make UNPROFOR more effective. And he advanced three very specific proposals about what might be done to make UNPROFOR more effective, so that it would be worthwhile staying. Minister Leotard was not able to be at this meeting, and so I told him I would advance his ideas, as well as some of my own, to the other troop-contributing nations to UNPROFOR. And so, in the margins of the defense ministers' NATO meeting, we had a meeting of the troop-contributing nations to NATO. And at that meeting, I presented Minister Leotard's ideas and some of my own. And there were detailed discussions then that arose at that meeting.

Out of that meeting came a conclusion, not to affirm any specific proposal, but came a conclusion that it was very important to try to retain UNPROFOR by making it more effective. And that we should put together some detailed proposals--some very specific, concrete proposals--on how to do that, and that these proposals should be evaluated in terms of their military effectiveness. Consequently, the troop-contributing nations, plus Italy and the United States, agreed to have their chiefs of defense staff meet in The Hague, next Monday and Tuesday, to review and evaluate these plans, and then to report back to their nations' capitals. From that, then, we would expect very specific proposals to go to the U.N., with the objective of making the UNPROFOR more effective.

Let me emphasize that we were not discussing at this meeting, we will not be talking about next Monday or Tuesday, ways of enlarging the role of UNPROFOR. It is only limited to how to make it more effective in its present mandate, which is delivery of humanitarian aid.

I believe there are two important results from these discussions here--these conclusions we reached here. The first, quite obviously, is an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of UNPROFOR. Secondly, the key nations in NATO were acting together in unity and with resolve, with a common purpose, in trying to preserve UNPROFOR for the benefits, very real benefits, that it has provided. And I think that these NATO nations acting in unity and with resolve have had an important effect on the dialogue that will be going on more generally in this area.

Indeed, it was at this time that the Carter/Karadzic discussions produced an offer from Karadzic. The offer is moving in the same direction that we were considering, which is how to make an improvement in the humanitarian situation in Bosnia. And to the extent that Karadzic follows through on that proposal, it will be a positive step. Past history of offers from the Bosnian Serbs have indicated some need for skepticism here. Nevertheless, we will see some results, or not, in the next few days. And to the extent these results are positive along the lines that Karadzic has proposed, it

will certainly be a positive step forward in the humanitarian direction.

In the meantime, we are proceeding—we will proceed—with our meeting at The Hague on Monday and Tuesday. We will proceed with our efforts to find ways of improving the effectiveness of UNPROFOR. This meeting, these results, will be valuable in and of themselves, and it's also possible that they may have some positive benefit on the Carter discussion with the Serbs, if that discussion takes place. I cannot predict, at this point, whether President Carter will actually meet with Karadzic, or what will come of those discussions if they're held. But I believe strongly that the end result should be more than just a cease-fire, more than just a—perhaps—a temporary improvement in the delivery of humanitarian aid, but a negotiated settlement based on the Contact Group's proposal.

And with those opening comments, I would be happy to take a few questions from the group.

Q: Mr. Secretary, the Secretary General said that he felt that perhaps the former President wasn't needed to negotiate a cease-fire. What are your comments on that? And number two, do you think this is some kind of stalling tactic, given the fact that those six points do not in any way address the Contact Group's map?

SECRETARY PERRY: If I take at face value the proposal, these six points were simply concessions that President Carter got to make him think that a trip to Bosnia was worthwhile. What he does with that trip, then, would no doubt be directed towards trying to find some basis for a peace plan. And he has indicated to President Clinton that the basis on which he would discuss any peace plan would be the Contact Group plan. But the six points by themselves are only concessions to President Carter to get him to come to Bosnia to make the talks. We should not try to estimate or extrapolate what the talks would consist of based on those six points.

Q: The other day you were saying that there was need to take action on an expeditious basis to improve the effectiveness of UNPROFOR, such as the opening of a blue route, etc. If Mr. Karadzic follows through on his proposal to allow the free movement of convoys in Bosnia, does that diminish in any way the need to proceed with such steps to make UNPROFOR more effective? Or do you need to follow through with these steps anyway, because any Bosnian-Serb promises that are made could be easily reversed?

SECRETARY PERRY: We definitely need to follow through, and we will follow through. We are going ahead with the meeting, we are going to go ahead with recommendations to the U.N. from that meeting. While I would be pleased to see Bosnian-Serb action on those six points, they are, as you suggest, actions they can take one day and reverse the next day. So, we need

something more solid than that. And, we will proceed on our plan exactly as we proposed.

Q: Mr. Secretary, can you imagine sending in an overwhelming force into Bosnia and allowing Serbian air defenses to remain intact?

SECRETARY PERRY: No.

Q: Mr. Secretary, I have the impression that one of the changes designed to enhance the effectiveness of UNPROFOR that you have in mind, might be a change in the rules of engagement. Can you tell me what changes you're looking for and what they would be designed to achieve?

SECRETARY PERRY: It is premature for me to describe what results might come out of this Monday and Tuesday meeting. I will confirm, though, that certainly rules of engagement is one of the issues that we discussed at our meeting and will be discussed at the meeting Monday and Tuesday. And, there are a wide variety of possible changes in that area. I don't want to speculate on what might come out of the meeting, though. But, certainly they will be discussing rules of engagement.

Q: Firstly given former President Carter's track record on Haiti, his involvement might perhaps be a little worrying. Could you clarify with the precision, is President Carter constrained to merely talk to the existing Contact Group plan with the Bosnian-Serbs or will he have any latitude to move away from that himself? And, secondly, could you perhaps explain why, if the sanction of force--the robust use of force--against provocations against the U.N. forces seems to have been removed because of U.N. concerns that it might lead to escalating cycle of violence, how can any more robust military steps in Bosnia have any hope of improving the situation for the U.N. troops? I just don't think they will be accepted by the U.N.

SECRETARY PERRY: On the point of President Carter, he has not been appointed by President Clinton as an emissary to negotiate a peace settlement. And, therefore, he has not been given constraints on what he can discuss or not discuss. He has indicated to President Clinton that his intention was to use the Contact Group peace plan as a basis for the discussions.

Your second had to do with the--could you summarize the second question?

Q: If you are talking about military means to strengthen UNPROFOR, it is quite clear that the U.N. doesn't particularly want to see robust military means employed for fear of making the situation on the ground worse. So how do you square that circle?

SECRETARY PERRY: I don't think it is quite clear that the U.N. is satisfied with the status quo in Bosnia. I am not satisfied with it, the United States is not satisfied with it, most of the nations here are not satisfied with it, and we are important members of the United Nations. So, no, I do not believe that the United Nations is satisfied with the status quo. I think the obligation, then, that we are looking at is making constructive proposals as to what can be done to change that status quo in a positive direction--understanding that first of all there may be some risks involved in doing that, and secondly, that some more resources (may be required) to do that.

Q: Mr. Secretary: You said in addition to introducing to the group the concepts that Mr. Leotard had discussed with you, you had some of your own ideas that you introduced. Can you tell us what they are, number one. Number two, on the withdrawal scenario, now that the Ministers have been briefed, at least on the general concept, can the United States announce sort of worse case numbers, either for NATO forces that would be necessary, or for American forces that would participate?

SECRETARY PERRY: The Defense Ministers were briefed, but they were given really a status report. The study is not completed yet. But, they are looking at a worse-case analysis. They are looking at an environment which could be hostile--not expecting or predicting a hostile environment. We are saying if we send a force in there, we ought to be prepared for a hostile environment. And, that has led them to propose, then, first of all heavily armored forces, and secondly, a good many of them. So we are talking about many brigades, but not many divisions. And, the U.S. would expect to play a very significant role in that, certainly more than a third of the forces that would be involved, perhaps as many as a half. We have no specific numbers or commitments at this stage. I am just trying to size for you the scope of this--it is a large undertaking. It is not a small undertaking, and we would be involved--the United States--in a large way.

Q: Your ideas that you added to Mr. Leotard's ideas in ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the U.N. force if it stays?

SECRETARY PERRY: I am going to defer on that, because I do not want to focus at this point on any specific ideas until they have a chance of evaluation of military effectiveness. I only want to suggest to you that there were many ideas presented, but that the impetus for them really were Minister Leotard's ideas--he was the one that first proposed doing this. And his ideas seemed to us to be worthy of serious consideration and that led to myself and others making other proposals as well. But, we really depend on the chiefs of our defense staff for making a careful, realistic evaluation of these before we want to tie ourselves to any one of them, or any several of them.

Q: Mr. Secretary: Some of the ideas that Minister Leotard had put forward had been discarded in the past as being militarily too difficult to implement, such as the corridor. Can you discuss at all what conditions might have changed or what has led you to believe that those things might be possible now?

SECRETARY PERRY: Yes, one particular idea which Minister Leotard has already mentioned in his press conference on Monday, was the idea of opening a corridor from Split to central Bosnia, including Sarajevo. That idea was considered fifteen or sixteen months ago and rejected. And, if you recall, at the time that was rejected, the Croats and the Muslims were fighting in that southern part of the country. And so there was a war zone through which those convoys would have to go. Since that time, there has been a federation between the Croats and the Muslims and it is much more practical now to envision opening that supply route than it was a year--a year and a quarter ago. So, there has been a very substantial change in the situation on the ground. I am not suggesting to you that this would be an easy undertaking--it still will be looked at very critically--but just that it will be very clearly be substantially more practical to do that now than would have been a year ago when it was considered then.

Q: Mr. Secretary: Are you concerned at all that the Carter initiative may dampen this momentum at NATO and with the U.N. to beef up UNPROFOR and try to straighten out the situation on its on?

SECRETARY PERRY: No I am not. I have discussed this with my fellow Defense Ministers this morning, and discussed it with the Secretary General, and all of us believe that the reason for doing this is just as strong today as it was a week ago. Do not take that as degrading the importance of the Carter mission. It is just that we believe that this effort is important in and of itself, and also that there are very great uncertainties about what will come out of the Carter mission and when.

I do want to emphasize specifically that even if Karadzic implements the six points that he made, while we would welcome that, that would not, in itself, be enough reason for stopping, because nearly all of those proposals could be reversed almost immediately.

Q: I understand that later today or tomorrow you will be meeting with Mr. Grachev in Moscow. Will you tell Mr. Grachev that any major Russian bloodletting in Chechnya will make it difficult to reconcile its stated interest in improving its international standing? And if a major attack does go ahead without such a warning from the U.S. or NATO, what impact do you think it would have on East European views of the Alliance?

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SECRETARY PERRY: At the present time, I think it is unlikely that I will have the opportunity to tell Minister Grachev anything, because it is probable he is still going to be in Chechnya. We are not in Moscow tomorrow. So, I think it is unlikely at this stage that I will have the opportunity for a face-to-face meeting with him. The United States government has already made its position clear to the Russian government on Chechnya, which is, we recognize this is an internal Russian matter. But we have expressed the hope that they can minimize the violence that has already been involved there, and that they will drive quickly towards a negotiated settlement. But, I really think it is unlikely I will have the opportunity to meet with Minister Grachev.

Thank you very much.

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